

Park & Recreation



Department Description

The Park & Recreation Department provides a multitude of facilities and services for neighborhoods and plays a key role in the quality of life for the community. The Department manages three major elements that contribute to various Mayor and City Council priorities: Parks and Open Space, Recreational Facilities, and Recreational Programs.

Parks and Open Space

There are over 39,000 acres of parks, open space, and aquatic areas available throughout the City. The Department provides a wide variety of opportunities for San Diegans to renew mind, body, and spirit in healthy outdoor settings. Landscaped and natural environments provide valuable opportunities for individuals, families, and groups to enjoy passive and active leisure. Joint-use agreements with schools maximize park use and provide active, programmable sports turf in park-deficient neighborhoods. Open space areas conserve and protect sensitive habitat and cultural history, and provide educational opportunities. There are 48 Maintenance Assessment Districts located throughout the City that provide property owners the opportunity to assess an annual fee in order to pay for landscape enhancements and other improvements, maintenance services, and activities beyond those generally provided by the City.

Recreational Facilities

The Department operates and maintains a large number of recreational facilities. These facilities include recreation centers, playgrounds, senior centers, teen centers, athletic fields, tennis courts, swimming pools, campgrounds, nature and visitor centers, gymnasiums, meeting rooms, weight rooms, historic sites, amphitheaters, skate parks, boat launches, docks, lakes, fishing piers, dog off-leash areas, and more. These facilities bring persons with diverse backgrounds together to enjoy special events, relax, and strengthen neighborhood bonds. The Department also operates several golf complexes and the Mount Hope Cemetery, which provides low-cost burial services.

Recreational Programs

Recreational programs, team sports, and activities help build self-esteem, confidence, social harmony, independent thinking, and self-discipline, while improving overall health, and promoting conflict resolution skills for youths and adults. Programs offered throughout the City include ceramics, learn-to-swim, karate, gymnastics, dance, soccer, basketball, water polo, bird watching, nature walks, golf, day camps, softball, track, archery, holiday parties, cultural events, outdoor movies, senior trips, tiny tot classes, and much more.

Park & Recreation

The Department's mission is:

To acquire, develop, operate, and maintain a park and recreation system that enriches the quality of life for residents and visitors alike, and preserves it for future generations

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives represent the action plan for the Department.

Goal 1: Instill community pride and ownership

It is in the community where the Department must focus a majority of its attention. Ensuring that the community is satisfied with the services it provides is paramount. The Department must improve avenues for community input and feedback in order to produce the most effective and valuable services. The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objectives.

- Provide inviting facilities and faces for the community
- Increase and diversify community involvement
- Improve public awareness of park successes, programs, and activities
- Increase volunteerism of children, youths, and young adults in the park system

Goal 2: Invest in environmentally-sensitive programs and practices

It is the Department's duty to ensure that future San Diegans enjoy the rich environment we enjoy today. As a result, the Department strives to take part in environmentally-sensitive practices that promote protection and preservation. The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objectives.

- Expand environmentally-sensitive management and maintenance practices
- Protect public lands and utilize best management practices for environmental preservation

Goal 3: Maintain public safety and quality park maintenance

Safety and cleanliness are the two most important and transparent issues that the community has when visiting the park. It is the Department's goal to maintain the City parks' condition through scheduled maintenance and responsive repairs, and create the safest environment for park-goers. The Department will continue to meet this goal by focusing on the following objectives.

- Maintain grounds in good condition
- Maintain facilities in good repair (maintenance and management)
- Work to ensure that the public is safe in parks and surrounding areas

Goal 4: Provide high quality services

In order to keep pace with the demands of the ever-changing community, the Department is committed to enhancing the quality of the services it provides. The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objectives.

- Create a culture of high-quality customer service
- Expand the use of service-enhancing technologies

Goal 5: Deliver innovative, responsive programs

With the changing environment and conditions in our diverse City, it is important for the Department to be responsive to the community's needs. Developing community partnerships and a more intimate relationship with the community will assist the Department in becoming more responsive and effective. The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objectives.

- Develop recreation programs that are responsive to community needs
- Improve relationships with community service organizations

Goal 6: Develop and retain committed, valued employees

Part of achieving excellence in any organization is the development of its employees. As the Department strives for a more efficient and effective organization, the Department must focus on developing its workforce. The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objectives.

Park & Recreation

- Improve recruiting
- Expand training opportunities for employees

Service Efforts and Accomplishments

Therapeutic Recreation Services provided a variety of programs in 2007, such as adaptive sports, fitness, tournaments, specialized day camps, inclusion activities, referrals, and outreach services to more than 50,000 participants. Additionally, two wheelchairs were added to the Power Beach Wheelchair Program prior to the busy summer season.

The Department partnered with the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) to offer the Summer Lunch Program at 17 recreation centers throughout the City. The program served 35,000 lunches and 29,000 snacks to children age 2-18 years, living in low income communities.

Balboa Park's West Mesa Canyon Enhancement project substantially decreased the amount of illegal activity on the west side of Balboa Park. Over 400 tons of vegetation was removed to increase visibility, decrease illegal activity, improve the condition of horticultural specimens, and increase the amount of positive recreational use. Because of this project, the Balboa Park Bridle Trail has seen a significant increase of hikers, joggers, and bikers in an area that had previously been underused and overlooked.

Mission Bay Park staff surveyed all 1,400 Washingtonia robusta palms and a two-year trimming plan was devised. The plan will trim all of the 1,400 palm trees over a two-year period, some of which have not be trimmed in more than 10 years. More than 1,000 trees were trimmed in 2007.

Open Space Division's Brush Management Program funding was increased to allow the Department to increase brush thinning on park property near structures (100 feet) by 300 percent. Staff meeting its goal of 271 acres in June 2008.

Golf Operations hosted several major events including the Junior World Golf Championship, Men's and Women's City Amateur Golf Championship, and the highly publicized Buick Invitational PGA Tour Event. In June 2008, the Torrey Pines Golf Course hosted the U.S. Open Golf Tournament. This is the first time in the history of the event that a municipal golf course hosted an event of this magnitude.

Budget Dollars at Work: Performance Expectations

Goal 1: Instill community pride and ownership

Performance Measure	Baseline FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
1. Achieve targets for recreation council staffing and recruitment (Year 1: Define targets for recreation council staffing and recruitment)	N/A	N/A	Targets for recreation council staffing and recruitment defined
2. Number of volunteer hours	174,943	202,657	136,000
3. Satisfaction with public access to information as determined through a survey	>95%	N/A ¹	90% or above
4. Customer satisfaction with the Park and Recreation system as determined through a survey	>95%	N/A ¹	90% or above
5. Number of minors engaged as park volunteers	1,425	3,478	1,200

¹ No survey taken in FY2008

Park & Recreation

Goal 2: Invest in environmentally-sensitive programs and practices

Performance Measure	Baseline FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
1. Number of environmentally-sensitive initiatives	N/A	N/A ²	N/A ²
2. Estimated total training hours on environmentally-sensitive practices (e.g., water, IPM, storm water) (FY 2008 hours reflect additional training required for renewed storm water permit.)	N/A	13,302	7,400
3. Number of regulatory agency violations received by Park and Recreation for storm water violations (park personnel violations and park contractor violations)	0	2	0
4. Cubic yards of mulch delivered (assists with water conservation and weed control)	N/A	476	1,000
5. Number of violations (e.g., encroachments on park land) identified by Zoning Investigator II work	N/A	N/A	N/A ¹

Goal 3: Maintain public safety and quality park maintenance

Performance Measure	Baseline FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
1. Results of customer survey on overall satisfaction with facilities	97.8%	N/A ¹	90% or above
2. Compliance with maintenance standards (as determined by an inspection completed quarterly for a representative sample of parks)	N/A	N/A	Develop guidelines for the program
3. Average time to repair a reported irrigation issue	N/A	Within 7 days	Within 7 days
4. Results of survey on personal safety perception (based on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 feeling the safest)	1.95	N/A ¹	2.10

Goal 4: Provide high quality services

Performance Measure	Baseline FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
1. Results of customer satisfaction survey on Park and Recreation programs activities	97.4%	N/A ¹	90% or above
2. Percent of recreation centers with high-speed internet services	0%	N/A ¹	80%

Goal 5: Deliver innovative, responsive programs

Performance Measure	Baseline FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
1. Compliance with customer desires for park programs as determined through market assessment (Year 1: Develop market assessment tool and move forward in completing market assessment)	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■Market assessment tool developed ■Plan in place for completing market assessment
2. Number of agreements with other community service organizations in place (excludes joint use agreements)	130	44	130

² Baseline will be determined in FY2009

Park & Recreation

Goal 6: Develop and retain committed, valued employees

Performance Measure	Baseline FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
1. Number of employee training hours	20,000	25,571	18,000

Budget Dollars at Work: Sizing, Workload and Utilization Data

	Actual FY2005	Actual FY2006	Actual FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
Sizing Data					
Acres of developed/undeveloped parks	38,890	38,913	39,314	39,320	39,788
Workload Data					
Acres of park maintained (excludes open space, regional and aquatic acres)	2,924	2,952	2,989	TBD ³	3,000
Number of open space acres maintained	20,219	20,820	21,318	TBD ³	21,500
Acres of golf courses operated	426	426	426	426	426
Number of golf complexes maintained	3	3	3	3	3
Number of park units managed	N/A	419	421	423	421
Number of dog off leash areas maintained	11	12	13	13	13
Number of playgrounds maintained	N/A	216	221	205	221
Number of recreation centers operated	51	51	52	52	53
Number of swimming pools operated	13	13	13	13	13
Estimated number of annual hours of operation of recreation centers	113,152	111,696	117,832	124,711	121,472
Number of acres of City-owned park urban interface thinned annually	N/A	N/A	80	271	590
Utilization Data					
Number of golf rounds played at municipal golf courses	359,928	369,082	338,900	291,909	298,000
Number of after school recreation program sites	17	17	17	17	17
Number of youth served in after school programs	95,943	80,837	57,111	88,032	60,000
Number of aquatic users	473,453	333,688	293,300	325,080	260,000

³ Figure will not be available until October 2008. This is part of the general benefit analysis that is developed after year-end closing is completed.